A HISTORY OF EDUCATION IN ISLE OF WIGHT COUNTY

BY

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D E D I C A T I O N

This History of Education in Isle of Wight County is fondly dedicated to

Marjorie

and the more than eight hundred principals, teachers and other personnel who by their loyalty made my thirty-nine years as Superintendent of the Isle of Wight County Schools most pleasant.

Windsor, Virginia
May 29, 1963

FOREWORD

At the request of the Isle of Wight Education Association for the Centennial of the Virginia Journal of Education, I have tried to prepare this history of Education in Isle of Wight County. Much of the material has been taken from my thesis for a M. A. from the College of William and Mary in 1940. I have found it very difficult to write of the years 1940 to 1963. Very significant has it been to find in the old records of the County even to Colonial times the same names of men and women now residents of Isle of Wight County who carry on the interest of free education. I hope that they who may read this account of history will be inspired to work for even better days in the education of the children in the ancient land of the Warroskyoaks.

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A HISTORY OF PUBLIC EDUCATION

IN ISLE OF WIGHT COUNTY, VIRGINIA

CHAPTER I

GENESIS AND GROWTH PRIOR TO THE AMERICAN REVOLUTION

Introduction

Education in Isle of Wight County had its genesis almost simultaneously with the 1607 English settlement at Jamestown. In December of 1608 Captain John Smith set forward for Were-comoco and lodged the first night at Warraskoyack, now the County of Isle of Wight. There the Indian king did his best to divert him from seeing Powhatan; but perceiving he could not prevail, advised in this manner:

> "Captain Smith, you shall find Powhatan to use you kindly, but trust him not, and be sure he has no opportunity to seize your arms; for he has sent for you only to cut your throats."

The Captain thanked him for his counsel, sent Master Sicklemore with two guides to seek "the lost colony of Sir Walter Raleigh and silke grasse" and left with the Warraskoyack Indians Samuel Collier, his page, to learn their language and customs.

Captain Smith later characterized Collier as one of the

most ancient planters very well acquainted with the language and habitation of the Indians, and wrote how this early Isle of Wight colonist was unfortunately killed during the Indian massacre of 1622 by an Indian sentinel. Samuel Collier was the first student of the Indian language and customs in Isle of Wight.

The Problem

More than three and a half centuries have passed since Samuel Collier was left to learn the language and customs of the Isle of Wight Indians. During these years many factors have been working to produce the present system of education prevailing in Isle of Wight County. This history is concerned primarily with the evolving and growing interest the citizens of Isle of Wight County have manifested in education; the types of schools existing at different periods in our history; the curriculum these schools afforded; the methods and qualifications of the teachers; the basic purposes of instruction; the personnel of the schools; and the method of support and control. An attempt will be made to show the evolving characteristics as the schools of one period grew into the schools of the following period and to indicate this growth at various stages of their development.

Geographical Setting

Isle of Wight County is situated in the southeastern

section of Virginia and in that part of the State usually designated as Tidewater. The County has an area of 314 square miles and a population of 17,164 (1960 Federal Census). Within its borders are two incorporated towns, Smithfield with a population of some 3000, and Windsor with 579. Isle of Wight County lies south of the James River, on which it borders for eighteen miles. From north to south the County extends thirty miles with an average breadth from east to west of ten miles. Three rivers touch, or are contained within its borders, the James, the Pagan, and the Blackwater. All these rivers are navigable and were of much value for transportation in the early development of Isle of Wight County. With the passing almost entirely of water transportation, the rivers no longer afford the advantageous facilities of the past. Splendid railways and State and County constructed highways now serve the transportation interests.

The population of Isle of Wight County is almost entirely rural, and has been since the earliest settlements. Approximately fifty percent of the population lives on farms with the others in the two towns or villages. In addition to the two towns, Rescue, Battery Park, Carrollton, Carrsville, Rushmere, Walters, Zuni, Camptown, and Isle of Wight Courthouse are centers of community life.

Some cotton is raised in the County, but the most important agricultural activity is raising peanuts. According to late figures Southampton County, adjoining Isle of Wight and

formed from this County, was the only one in the State raising more peanuts than Isle of Wight. The soil of the County is admirably suited for producing the large white nuts commanding the highest prices on the peanut market. Years ago there were several large processing peanut plants in Smithfield. These plants used much local labor. Several disastrous fires and railways and highways displacing water transportation have shifted the Peanut Capital of the world from Smithfield to Suffolk. Peanuts, however, remain the money crop of the Isle of Wight farmer. Other crops are oats, soybeans, potatoes, melons, vegetables, eggs, and poultry. The County also produces considerable timber, a commodity recently made more valuable by the building of the Camp-Union pulp mills in the southern end of the County.

The most famous product of the County is the Smithfield ham, the raising and curing of which has been a specialty of Isle of Wight farms for over three hundred years. In this age of automation, while the raising of the hogs still remains on the farms, the large processing plants in the Town of Smithfield now do the curing. This delectable meat is known the world over, and is supposed to receive its renowned quality and flavor from the fact that the hogs are fed peanuts and that the hams are cured by a process known only to the ham curers in the Town of Smithfield. Smithfield hams are shipped to all parts of the world with orders received in many foreign languages.

Parenthetically it may be said that thousands of hams annually sold as Smithfield hams, come from hogs that never roamed in the peanut fields, nor are cured in the Town of Smithfield.

Historical Setting

Isle of Wight County is one of the eight original shires into which the Virginia Colony was divided, and its history goes back to the settlement at Jamestown. Soon after the English had founded the first permanent English in the New World, Captain John Smith began to explore not only for new lands, but for food for the famishing colonists. On one of the first of these expeditions he journeyed down the James River to the present City of Hampton, and on his return to Jamestown, contacted the Warraskoyack Indians, who were then inhabitants of what is now Isle of Wight County. Of this occasion the English explorer wrote:

> "With sixteene bushells of corne I return towards our Forte; by the way encountred with two Canoes of Indians who came aboard me, being the inhabitants of Waroskoyack, a kingdom on the south side of the river, which is in breadth five miles and twenty miles or neare from the mouth; with which I traded, who but having their hunting provisions, requested me to return to their towne, where I should load my boat with corne; and with neare thirty bushells I returned to the forte, the very name whereof gave great comfort to our despairing company."

Thomas Studly and William Simmons also mentioned this exploration.

Undoubtedly Captain John Smith visited many times the

friendly Indians just a few miles across the James River from Jamestown, and the fertile fields and game-invested forests of Warraskoyack gave succor to the Jamestown colonists. The friendship existing between the English and the Warraskoyacks has been illustrated by Captain John Smith leaving with the Indians Samuel Collier. The friendship of the Indians south of the James was held until the terrible massacre of 1622, when the Warraskoyacks joined with the Indian tribes in Virginia in an attempt to blot out the white colonists.

The following incident may throw some light on why this former friendly Warraskoyack was changed to hate:

> "Tachonekintaco, an old weronce of Warraskoyack whom Captain Newport brought as prisoner with his son Tangoit about 1610 to the lord general at Port Comfort was released upon promises and solemn contract to give five hundred bushels of wheat, beans and peas for copper, beads and hatchets. The whites carried his son away and left his nephew as hostage. He slipped away, leapt overboard with his legs fettered together with a sea gown on. He either swam away or sank. Indians often teased and mocked the whites saying that he had escaped. The Indian king refused to perform his bargain. His lordship to show that he could not be mocked sent two companies under Captain Brewster and Captain Argall who burned two of the Indian towns."

First Settlement at Lawnes

Although Jamestown was nearby it was not until 1618 that the English first attempted a settlement in Isle of Wight. This was made by Captain Christopher Lawne at the junction of James River and Lawnes Creek, a creek which today still carries

the name of Isle of Wight's first colonist and is a dividing line between Surry and Isle of Wight counties. Lawne's Plantation had some one hundred settlers and was represented by Captain Lawne and Ensign Washer at the first Legislative Assembly of English people in the Western Hemisphere. The Lawne settlement lasted only a few years. Sickness, especially malaria, so weakened it that it was abandoned, and Captain Lawne moved farther up the river and later fell a victim of malaria.

Bennett's Welcome 1622

In 1622 Edward Bennett established a settlement four or five miles down the James River from Lawnes Creek, and in the vicinity of the present Morgart's Beach. Here to Edward Bennett's Plantation came one hundred and twenty settlers aboard the "Sea Flower" under the command of Captain Ralph Hamor. This settlement was called also "Bennett's Welcome," and later Warraskoyack.

Basse's Choice 1622

A few miles from Edward Bennett's Plantation Nathaniel Basse made another settlement in 1622. Basse's settlement was known as Basse's Choice and was located across a point of land now known as Day's Point. Basse's Choice was on the Pagan River, a few miles down that river from Smithfield.

Hardly had this settlement been made, with buildings

still incomplete, came the awful Indian massacre on Good Friday, March 22, 1622. There were three hundred and forty-seven whites murdered by the Indians in the Virginia Colony. Fifty-three of these were settlers of Isle of Wight, principally at the two settlements near what was to become the Town of Smithfield, Bennett's Welcome and Basse's Choice. Naturally the plantations on the south side of the James River were abandoned with the colonists flocking to Jamestown for mutual defense against the redmen. After punitive expeditions against the Indians the whites gradually returned and the 1623-1624 census showed fifty-three people living at Worwicke-Squeak and Basse's Choice. With the return of the whites the population of Isle of Wight rapidly increased and settlements were made farther down the river, and some of the more daring of the early settlers established themselves away from the river banks.

Warraskoyack is Changed to Isle of Wight

In 1634 the territory then forming the County was officially proclaimed a shire, Warroskoyack Shire; three years later the name was changed to Isle of Wight. It was very likely this name was selected because of the predominance of settlers from the Isle of Wight, England. Many of the early settlers came from that island off the southern coast of England, and such names as Newport and Blackwater, familiar Isle of Wight, England names became a part of Isle of Wight, Virginia. Dr. Robert Bennett Bean in his volumn "The Peopling

of Virginia" indicates by his data that Virginia's earliest settlers came almost entirely from the south and southwest of England and that in the early period of Virginia history 62.4% of the inhabitants of Isle of Wight County had typical English names.

Benjamin Syms in Isle of Wight

At Basse's Choice on February 16, 1623-1624 was listed one, Benjamin Syms, aged 33, who came over in the "_____." Just across the narrow Pagan River was land patented by Captain John Moon, who, by his will probated in 1655 and preserved in the Isle of Wight County Court Records, left an income from certain cattle to be used for the schooling of poor children in Newport Parish.

Captain John Moon, planter of Warwicksquicke, on March 6, 1633 received "two hundred acres of land on the East side of said creek, and east towards Pagan Creek, for the transportation of himself and three servants who came over in 'The Returne of the London' in 1623." Just above the name of Benjamin Syms listed in the muster of Thomas Bennett's men at Basse's Choice appears the name of Roger Heford, aged 22, who came over in the "Returne of the London" in 1623. There is a probability that these two men, Benjamin Syms, who by his will probated in 1634-1635 and filed in Isle of Wight County, established the first permanent free school in Virginia, and Captain John Moon, who by his will of 1655, set up the first fund, came to

Virginia on the same boat "The Returne of the London." Even if they did not migrate together it is more probable that living as they did just across a narrow river from each other, they knew each other well, and conversed on the topic of free schooling.

The Reverend Green's Plea for Education in Virginia

The Reverend Roger Green was one of the first agitators for the establishment of the town system in the South. He presented a tract concerning Virginia to the Lord Bishop of London upon his return to England in 1661. The tract was entitled "Virginia's Cure, or An Advisive Narrative Concerning Virginia." Isle of Wight County at that time was a rather large part of the Colony, and very much of what was said likely applied to the County's people and their customs. The Reverend Green desired "to show the unhappy state of the Church in Virginia, and the true remedy of it." He gave a brief description of its people, their scattered habitations, and the resulting unhappy consequences of their scattered abodes both to themselves and "the poor heathen about them." He wrote that Virginia was divided into several counties, they in turn forming about fifty parishes, with the people living upon the sides of the rivers. He lamented the lack of ministers, saying that not one-fifth of the parishes were supplied, that Church attendance was hindered by the extremities of the weather, and the length of the way to Church.

"Lastly," he commented, "their almost general want of schools for the education of their children, is another consequent of their scattered planting, of most sad consideration, most of all bewailed of Virginia parents there."

"The want of schools, as it renders a very numerous generation of Christian children born in Virginia (who naturally are of beautiful and comely persons, and generally of most ingenious spirits than those in England) unserviceable for any great employments in either Church or State, so likewise it obstructs the hopefullest way they have for the conversion of heathen which is by winning the heathen to bring in their children to be taught and instructed in our schools, together with the children of the Christians."

Early Attempts at Schools in Virginia

Before 1619 there were no children in the Virginia Colony, and consequently no problem as to their education. In that year one hundred orphans were sent over by the London Company. Soon thereafter attempts were made for the schooling of children. The earliest record of endowment support for free schools in Virginia was in 1619-1620 when the sum of five hundred pounds was given by an anonymous contributor to the Treasurer of the London Company for the purpose of erecting a school for the insturction of a convenient number of Indian youths, these to be taught reading, the Christian doctrine and some useful handicraft.

Soon after this there was another plan for building and opening the East India school. Workmen were sent to the Colony, and work apparently started. The Indian massacre interrupted both of these early educational projects in Virginia education.

Will of Benjamin Syms

The will of Benjamin Syms did provide in 1634-1635 for the building and operation of a free school in Elizabeth County, Virginia. This endowment was strengthened later by a similar gift from Dr. Eaton, a local physician. The Syms-Eaton school is said to be the first permanent free school erected in the English colonies, and the Benjamin Syms endowment has said "to have been the earliest foundation for free education made in English America by a citizen of an English colony."

The Jamestown Industrial School

As early as 1643 "overseers and guardians were forced to instruct and educate orphans" and three years later there was provided a school at Jamestown to which each shire sent children in accordance with the following provisions:

> "The commissioners of the several counties do select in each county at the age of eight, or at least seven, male or female, which are to be sent up to Jamestown between this and June the next to be employed in the public flax houses under such master and mistress as shall be there appointed in carding, knitting and spinning."

The Act further provided that corn, clothing, bed, shotes, hens, and shoes should be supplied by the County. Two houses

forty by twenty with an eight foot pitch were to be built to care for the children. The commissioners were cautioned not to take any children except from such parents "who by reason of their poverty are disable to maintain and educate them."

Other Steps in Virginia Public Education

The law of 1705 provided that when the estate of any orphan was too small to maintain him, such orphan was to be apprenticed until he was twenty-one for the purpose of learning a trade, and that his master was obliged to teach him to read and write.

In 1727 it became lawful for the Church Wardens to bind out as apprentices children of parents who were incapable of taking due care of their education in Christian principles. This was subject to a certificate from the Court.

In 1748 another Act stated that when the profits of an orphan's estate were insufficient to maintain him, he was to be bound to some tradesman, merchant, mariner, or other person approved by the Court. This apprenticeship was to continue until the ages of twenty-one for the boys, and eighteen for the girls. The master or mistress was to provide him or her "diet, clothes, lodgings, and accommodations fit and necessary and was to teach or cause him or her to be taught to read and write."

Legislation of 1755 required the Church Wardens to keep a register of all the poor in the parishes and to levy an

allowance for the education of poor children placed in the "vestry poorhouses" until they could be bound out.

By the time of the American Revolution the poor laws and the apprentice laws had been built up to take care of all poor children and children of poor parents as well as illegitimates. The duties and the powers of dealing with the poor were transferred in 1778 from the Church Wardens to State or County officers. Legislation in 1786 provided that overseers of the poor in each district make monthly reports as to poor children to the Courts in their County. Poor orphans by the authority of the Court were to be bound to be taught some art, trade or business as particularized in the indenture, and also reading and writing, and additionally for the boys, arithmetic, including the rule of three. At the end of the service, the boy or girl was to receive three pounds and ten shillings.

Many of the above Acts reveal the English influence in the Colony and later in the State of Virginia. Apprentice and poor laws enacted in the seventeenth and even in the eighteenth centuries followed closely the customs of England. Step by step ground was being gained in the theory that it was the duty of the State to care for the needs of children and especially the educational needs.

Educational Interest of Early Isle of Wight Settlers

The interest of the early settlers of Isle of Wight County in the schooling of their children can be best evidenced

by the recorded wills and accounts of that period. Fortunately the Isle of Wight County Court records have for the most part been preserved in good condition and afford knowledge of this interest.

Wills Providing for Individual Education

One of the earliest references to schooling in the Isle of Wight records is in the will of Humphrey Clarke, recorded March 3, 1655. In this document the desire is expressed that the servants of Humphrey Clarke be kept together and one-half the benefit of their labor be used for maintaining his son John at school.

Frances Corsey by her will recorded February 27, 1679 appointed Mr. Thomas Graves executor of one-half of her estate to educate her son John, the orphan of Richard Corsey.

In his will recorded May 1, 1679 Robert Bartlett left a legacy with provisions that his daughter be placed "in the tuition of Tobias Kobble."

Directions were left for the executors of the estate of Thomas Griffin, who died in 1669, to place his son of the same name in a teacher's care that he might learn to read, write and cast accounts; and should the executors fail to observe this injunction they were to deliver to the son eight thousand pounds of tobacco.

William Richardson of the Upper Parish left to Katherine, his wife, one-half his estate, the other half to go to "Mary

Wisse to educate her daughter, Elizabeth." This will was recorded October 10, 1687.

By his will of December 10, 1687 James Haclelowell left "the cattle at John Norsworthy's to be used for her schooling." This bequeath was for his daughter Olive.

David Williams in his will probated October 10, 1687 desired that his legatees, William Frazzell, Sr. and Thomas Hawkins should look after his son's schooling.

In his will of March 26, 1692 Richard Lewis of the Lower Parish left to his son, Richard, the plantation on which William Duck lived, the said Duck to take in tuition his son, Richard, "to learn him to read and wright."

Arthur Smith of Smithfield in his will written October 1, 1645 and probated February 9, 1693 used this language, "bringing up my children in the fear of God and to learn to read." He also willed books to his son, Arthur Smith II.

Wills Providing for Free Schools

Citations of the wills indicate an interest of early Isle of Wight citizens in education for their children. There were several Isle of Wight citizens whose interest in education was more extended.

Benjamin Syms, for instance, a citizen of Isle of Wight County, while by his will established the first free school in America in Elizabeth County, Virginia (now Hampton, Va.), and according to Donald Ransome Taylor in an article in the

Virginia Journal of Education, January 1963 "no existing records reveal Syms living anywhere other than in Isle of Wight." Thus while Isle of Wight County can not claim the site of the first free school in the American colonies, it can claim it was the home of this great benefactor of education.

In his will of 1655, Captain Moon, a merchant, planter and Burgess from Isle of Wight, bequeathed four female cattle to remain a stock forever for poor fatherless children and destitute old people in the Lower Parish of Isle of Wight County. The female cattle increase was to be held for stock, but the male cattle were to be disposed of for clothing and schooling.

Many students of Virginia's educational history, including Dr. Lyon C. Tyler, have attributed to Captain John Moon the establishment of a free school in Isle of Wight County. But it is likely that the benefactor attempted in his philanthropy only the schooling of the poor and destitute children in Newport Parish. If there were recipients of his charity they probably attended the old field schools at the expense of the income from the legacy of Captain Moon.

The will of Henry King was recorded on March 2, 1681. This document clearly states that one hundred acres of land lying and being next to Mr. England's, and having been exchanged for land of his, was being given "to this parish where I now live towards the maintenance of a free school." No

record can be found to indicate what happened to the land left for the school. Bruce suggests that these one hundred acres went to a school already established, and that Captain Moon, or some other philanthropist had instituted the free school to which Henry King's land went for maintenance. It may be that Henry King had in mind the establishment as well as the maintenance of a free school. The term "free school" as far as can be determined, was first used in Isle of Wight records in the will of Henry King.

Another will with provisions for the establishment of a free school was that of Arthur Smith II, recorded June 30, 1697. In case he were without heirs his land was to go for the establishment of a free school in Newport Parish.

The will of Charles Fulgham recorded February 7, 1765 might have provided a free school in the Town of Smithfield. Mr. Fulgham left his estate to his daughter, when she became of age. Should the daughter have not reached the specified age, or if before that age she married the said estate consisting for the most part of "fourteen Negroes" was to be used for a free school in the Town of Smithfield for the education of as many poor children "as hire of them will amount to, and only to such whose parents are not able to give them learning." These children should be residents of Newport Parish. Mr. Fulgham further willed that the Church Wardens as they were appointed have the management of the

"said Negroes," and hire them out and make application of the money carrying out his desires.

No record can be located of such a school having been established and it is assumed that the young lady became of age before she married. Thus a strange paradox of a free school from slave labor did not come to pass.

The Elizabeth Smith Free School

The most interesting of the early free schools in Isle of Wight County was the Elizabeth Smith Free School. Interest is added to this school by the fact that the building in which the school was conducted was standing on Mason Street in Smithfield less than fifteen years ago when it was demolished to make a parking lot. The indenture which made this school possible is very clear as to the terms and conditions under which the school was established. The building which also housed one of the earliest constituted Masonic lodges in Virginia has additional distinction as having been used as a private school for Smithfield after the American Revolution, and when the present system of public schools was established, became one of the three schools started in the Town of Smithfield. This building was erected on Lot No. 26 in the Town of Smithfield in 1752 or prior to that date. An indenture was made on the sixth day of January 1753 between Joseph Bridger, Gentleman, of the County of Isle of Wight and Miles Cary and Richard Kello of the County of Southampton and

Richard Baker of the County of Isle of Wight in which the last three as trustees were to see that the interests and wishes of Elizabeth Smith were put into execution. Joseph Bridger was indebted to Elizabeth Smith, wife of Arthur Smith IV, a sum of money. This money Elizabeth Smith desired used, when paid, for the establishment of a free school in the Town of Smithfield. But Elizabeth Smith, being under "coverture" could not in her own person dispose of the same nor make any kind of contract by the laws of the land at that time. Therefore the said Joseph Bridger in behalf of Elizabeth Smith did settle and endow that he, Joseph Bridger, when one hundred and forty-five pounds of this money was in hand, would buy some convenient lot or half acre of land in the Town of Smithfield. With part of this money he would erect, build and furnish, or cause the same to be done, a wooden house with the dimensions twenty-eight feet in length and sixteen feet in breadth. Part of the indenture reads:

> "Whereas the said Elizabeth Smith is disposed out of her goodwill and charity as well as to the children of the poor inhabitants of the Town of Smithfield as to any other poor orphans who cannot obtain a suitable education by any other means to settle and maintain a free school in the Town of Smithfield after the manner and under the several restrictions hereinafter mentioned."

Some of the limitations of the indenture were:

1. The trustees should provide a schoolmaster of sound morals conformable to the doctrines and discipline of the Church of England;

2. Poor children either male or female who have neither friends nor estate sufficient should be schooled;

3. The boys were to be taught reading, writing and arithmetic;

4. The girls were to be taught reading and writing;

5. No child was to be admitted to the school before the age of 10;

6. The boys were to continue their schooling three years;

7. The girls were to have only two years of schooling;

8. After three years the boys were to be apprenticed out to some honest calling as should be most suitable to their capacities;

9. The girls after two years were to be bound out to some honest woman to be taught household affairs;

10. The Trustees were to examine the circumstances of children applying for admission for schooling;

11. The schoolmaster was to be paid twenty shillings per pupil per year out of the interest arising out of the endowment;

12. If the building were to be vacant for lack of a teacher, the same was to be rented, and the amounts of the rent added to the endowment;

13. The terms of the indenture should be executed by Joseph Bridger by June 1756;

14. That under the limitations mentioned it was to continue a free school forever and be used for no other purpose;

15. That the trustees were to be perpetuating.

The indenture was signed by Elizabeth Smith, Joseph Bridger, Miles Cary, R. J. Kello, and Richard Baker, and sealed and delivered in the presence of Edmund Archer, John Hyndman, John Mallory, Robert Barry and Jordan Thomas. The first three were merchants of the Town of Smithfield, and the last, Jordan Thomas, the surveyor who laid of the Town of Smithfield at its incorporation in 1752.

Two years before the expiration of the time in which Joseph Bridger under terms of the indenture had to build and furnish the school, Arthur Smith and Elizabeth granted "to Joseph Bridger for uses and trusts made in the indenture of January 7, 1753, one lot or half acre of land lying in the Town of Smithfield in the County of Isle of Wight and known as lot No. 26 according to the survey made of the Town and bounded according to the surveyor's plat of said Town, relation being thereto had more fully appear of and in which Town lands the said Arthur Smith was lately seized as tenant in fee simple and by one Act of Assembly made at the College in the City of Williamsburg in the 28th year of the reign of our Sovereign, Lord George the Second."

Dr. Purdie in his unpublished and incomplete history of Smithfield had this to say in part as to Lot No. 26 on which was erected the Elizabeth Smith Free School:

> "This lot fronts on Mason Street opposite No. 23, on which is the residence of Jno. Sinclair. In 1752 there was on it a one storied brickhouse,

> thirty by eighteen feet, with a gable roof. The property belonged to Arthur Smith IV in common with the land on which the Town of Smithfield was established ..... Who caused the house to be erected is unknown. For more than sixty years it has formed a part of the Mason's Hall of Smithfield Union Lodge No. 18."

Dr. Purdie traces the history of the building and tells how the Smithfield Masons secured possession of the property. Smithfield Union Lodge was chartered in October 1787 and the officers were installed and set to work in March 1788. Early attention was directed to securing a lodge hall, and the abandoned Elizabeth Smith school was selected.

The following Court Order of the Court of Common Session held for the County of Isle of Wight June 8, 1788 is quoted by Dr. Purdie:

> "Upon motion of William Hardy, Gentleman:
>
> On behalf of the fraternity of Free and Accepted Masons of Smithfield Lodge No. 18: It is ordered (by hand with the consent of Richard Kello, surving trustee to the Free School House in the said Town) that they have leave to build a new story upon the old one, and an addition of twelve feet to the end of the said schoolhouse, with winding stairs, for the use of the free Masons belonging to the said Lodge, and to be called Mason's Hall on their paying to the said trustee, their heirs etc. the sum of one shilling current money, on the first day of each January in each year ensuing."

Elizabeth Smith not only provided for the building, furniture and teachers' salaries in her lifetime, but by her will in 1774 left additional funds for the instruction in her school of at least six more orphan children.